The Evening World Daily Magazine

MONDAY, MAY 27, 1918

Four Months in France With the 165th Infantry (The Old "Sixty-Ninth")

March to the Final Training Station and Men's Eagerness to Be Ready for Action in the Trenches Described by Former First Lieut. Benz, Who Was in Active Service at the Front.

SECOND INSTALMENT of a personal story of fighting and dying on the battlefields and in the trenches—a narrative which every New Yorker will want to read. The remaining instalments will be published daily in The Evening World.

By George H. Benz

Former First Lieutenant, Company I, 165th Infantry.
(Formerly 69th N. Y. N. G.)
Written Exclusively for The Evening World.

THE day after Christmas we started off again, this time to go to our final training station. The march started in a driving blizzard and a temperature near zero. I don't believe half a dozen men of our outfit had two pairs of socks with him. And so many had worn out shoes that we left something like twenty-five behind, to follow us by train or wagon later. All the cripples, those recovering from disease or with flat feet, were left behind too.


LT. GEO. H. BENZ

I doubt if any army ever made a march like that. We plodded along in the snow, making fairly good time, and with the men in good spirits. It was so cold that snow made a mound on one's hat and stayed there, and water froze in one's canteen.

We had been on the road for about two hours when the staff officers started worrying us. There was an A. E. F. order about marching your men far to the right of the road, always seeing that No. 4 man of the squad was on the crown. The road we took was so narrow that if we followed out instructions No. 1 man would be way over in the ditch. The staff officers ruled the order held, nevertheless, and the only way we got along was by shifting the first two men to the place held by three and four every hour, so they wouldn't get too tired out.

Another order ruled that no man would be allowed to drop out of a column for any reason unless he bore a card from an officer permitting him to do so. That was some job, watching some hardly pushed man full of grit trying to keep up the pace, falter and then fall face downward into the snow. It was your job to run up, see if he really was sick and then give him his little card "permitting" him to leave the column. He would be picked up later by the ambulance men.

Again, when a man falls out, some one in his squad must carry his heavy pack and his rifle. Take a squad hard-pushed from a long day's march and have one of the men fall out. If you gave the pack to another man and the rifle to another, pretty soon you had two more men out. It was no uncommon sight to see a column entering a town in the evening with every officer loaded down with perhaps two or three packs.

The snow was so deep and the weather so severe that the mess wagons could not keep up with the column, and the first day they were six miles behind and the second more than ten. We were carrying no reserve rations, so that meant the men faced hunger. I recall one night, when the wagons were far behind, we entered a town at 7 o'clock, in the darkness. The men had had nothing but a few crumbs since breakfast. Some of the officers were sent ahead and we had managed to buy twelve loaves of bread from the villagers. After the men were sent into their stables and pigpens for the night's rest we walked around with the bread and a bayonet. We'd stick our head in a door, ask how many men were there and then cut off a portion of the loaf. It was just like feeding so many animals. Twelve loaves of bread for 250 men! They grabbed at it as if they hadn't seen food for years.

The next morning our company managed to borrow some bacon from another outfit, whose wagon had come in around midnight. Before we could cook it we received the order to pull out. The men went on their way eating raw and half-frozen bacon. They had not had a real meal for two days.

Limping, hungry and dirty, they arrived at their final training station. There they were again billeted in barns and stables. Snow covered the hillsides and the valleys, and soon we had it churned into a mudhole.

In this place we really started training—that is, as far as we could without grenades, without gas masks, without auto rifles, or, in short, without any modern weapon of war. Our schedule called for so many minutes' instruction in the use of the rifle grenade every day, and I remember standing on a hillside with the company lined up in front of me, trying to teach them what a tromblon looked like and using a tin can as a substitute. Another officer talked on gas. Another on the common hand grenades. We wasted almost a month telling them about new weapons, because we had none to show them.

Finally the arms started coming in, and then we could train. We received everything but rifle grenades, and they came a few days before we started toward the front. We did not have time to use them, so were ordered to fire them all off in one day. We had the regular number of tromblons for the rifles, and a tromblon is a steel cap that fits over the end of the rifle barrel, so a grenade can be shot from it, but we didn't have enough bushings to hold them to the barrel. Therefore, they were useless.

Our principal trouble was with clothing. The uniforms of the men had started to wear out, and their leggins were a shame. One day a number of British uniforms came in, and we practically had to order men to wear them. They said they wanted to be in their own uniforms. They were told to take the English buttons off them and substitute the American buttons. About a week later we did receive American uniforms.

The first trench shoes we received caused a wail of woe to go up through the battalion. They were of rough leather and heavily hobnailed. Most of them were of British manufacture. As soon as they would get damp they caused trouble. In the morning they were so stiff a man couldn't get his feet into them. Even at this time we didn't have enough socks to go around. The battalion surgeon had a time of it with foot complaints. He was shy of adhesive tape, gauze and medicines. That surgeon was Lieut. John Lyttle, who formerly practised medicine in New York City.

We were in this town for almost two months. It was populated practically by old men and women and children. Under A. E. F. orders, no soldier could buy anything but light wines and beer. The only trouble we had was when one of the priests from the section would distill some liquor called Palestine, or "prune juice," about 90 per cent. alcohol, and sell it to the men. Few would drink it—it was far worse than any of the "kill quick" whiskey sold years ago on the Bowery.

A few weeks before we left we received our steel helmets, dubbed "Tin Lizzies." The gas masks came too, French and British make. We were supposed to get the masks on in six seconds. The 69th did it in four. There was only one man, I remember, who failed to make it in that time, a little fellow by the name of Grabino. He always wanted to take a full breath before he started putting it on too. He learned differently the first time up.

In the early part of March the order we had been waiting for so long came to us. That was, we were to move up and relieve another regiment of the Rainbow that had been on the line.

For two days before we pulled out that old town was a hotbed for all sorts of rumors about where we were going and jokes about how many would be "pushing up daisies" within a short time. I recall going into a blacksmith's shop one afternoon and finding half a dozen men of our company in there, headed by little Corbett, waiting in line for a chance at a grinding wheel. They wanted to sharpen up their bayonets!

Continued on This Page To-Morrow.

How One New York High School Is Helping the Red Cross

WASHINGTON IRVING GIRLS BUSY IN THEIR WORKROOMS PROVING THAT THEIR SCHOOL IS "100% AMERICAN."

Aerial Mail Causes New Malady

Latest Epidemic Is Hinged Neck, Due to Looking for the Morning Mail, Though Staring at the Clouds Looks Like a Non-Essential Industry—Aerial Postman Makes an Eagle Look Like a Rubber Heeled Pedestrian—What Will Happen to the Parcel Posted Eggs Handed Out Eleven Miles Above the Right Address.

BY ARTHUR ("BUGS") BAER.

SOME of the stylish maladies published by the man's sized shindig on the wrong side of Mr. Atlantic's whale aquarium are shell shock, trench toes and leaping measles. The European edition of European measles shouldn't be scrambled with the New Jersey brand of galloping eczema known to the inmates of Staten Island ferryboats as eight pronged 'skeeters. While slightly related to the Jersey 'skeeter family by alimony on their uncle's side, the European leaping measles are very sociable and will spend the week end in anybody's necktie without first going through the formality of ringing the door bell. It's Latin label is cootie. Coot, meaning to hide, and ie, meaning to seek. Which gives you hide-and-seek, with the accent on the hide. All these luxuries are sclons of the Kaiser's ambition to get thrown out of a Paris restaurant for slipping the waiter an Iron Kross instead of a tip.

Shell shock, trench toes and leaping measles have not yet succeeded in pontooning the ocean. But in the mean time we have some fine young ailments of our own on our edge of Mrs. Atlantic's garage for uncanned sardines. The latest epidemic is hinge neck.

This is positively the most fashionable method of being uncomfortable since Mr. Shouts hopped out of bed on his left foot one morning and decided that the mint was coining jitney pieces to enable New Yorkers to dangle from subway straps like ripe persimmons who didn't know the season was over. Hinge neck is caused by looking for the morning mail.

In the good old days, when folks used to tie their napkins around their necks, and letter carriers were letter carriers and not blooming sparrows, the postman would flatwheel along the macadam and toss your morning seed catalogues, oil well literature and unpaid doctor bills into your vestibule. You knew where to look for your morning mail, even if you didn't want to look at it.

But since they have crocheted this airplane postal service, whereby the morning mail goes cavorting through the suburban atmosphere about three miles above your celluloid collar, folks have got hinges in their Adam's apples trying to see whether the postman is reading their sovenir postal cards before he shows 'em to the next door gock before he hands 'em to them.

Making the world unsafe for monarchy is a very lilting air. But why make the world unsafe for necks? And acquiring hinges in your neckpiece from staring at the clouds looks to us like a non-essential industry. Having your mail stampeding around in the soft June zephyrs is a fine, fat, young idea for a movie scenario, but it looks like we will spend this next summer kissing the kaiser (small k, like the percentage of kick in beevo) and snapping at our letters like a whoozamologist abducting butterflies with a net. Yea, bo.

It's getting so that our aerial postmen make an eagle look like a rubber-heeled pedestrian. Fourth-class postmasters are flitting around in third-class clouds hoping that the next Administration won't be Republican or Bull Moose. Which kinda makes it unanimous. Even a fourth-class postmaster doesn't want a fifth-class Administration. So far, the method of delivering the mail from the mezzanine floor of the world has been a success, but the world is waiting to see what happens to the first dozen parcel posted eggs which are handed out eleven miles above the right address.

The instigators of the airplane mail service claim that the new ceiling system of shooting mail is much faster than the old method of crawling along the floor. It may be faster, but there are some letters that we don't want to get faster. And there is one phase of the dope that neither the new airplane mail system nor jostling the cuckoo clocks up an hour will change a bit. That's postage due. When you get a letter collect, it is collect. Airplane mail or no airplane mail, postage due is postage due. You said it.

MONDAY, MAY 27, 1918

Washington Irving High Sets Pace for All Schools In War Service and Work

Seven Girls Serving "Over There," 707 Stars on Big Service Flag, and Whole School Backing Them Up With Red Cross Work, War Savings Stamps and Liberty Bonds.

By Hazel V. Carter

SEVEN names on the Nation's Honor Roll in the corridor of the Washington Irving High School represent seven Washington Irving girls who are giving their services Over There.

Seven hundred and seven stars on the big service flag, recently raised at the Washington Irving, stand for 707 brothers or fathers who are offering their lives Over There.

And right within the walls of the Washington Irving almost 7,000 girls are backing up the 7 and 707 with probably the greatest programme of war activities of any school in the country.

When you enter the corridor of the Washington Irving you wonder whether you're in a canteen, a Red Cross hospital, a Flower Show benefit or a War Savings headquarters.

You see tables and chairs where coffee is served, girls in Red Cross apron and veil, a booth where flowers are sold for the cause and a War Savings office where pages of green stamps are changing hands across the counter for Uncle Sam.

Suddenly the class bell rings, and the corridors are filled with thousands of middy bloused girls whose Latin grammars and algebras, tucked under their arms, tell you that it is just an up to date, 100 per cent. American high school.

"I got 90 in English for my theme on 'Why We Should Give to the Red Cross' and 95 on my Liberty Bond Scrap Book," one little girl tells her chum as they pass down the hall.

"Oh, hurry up, before the bell rings, and let's see how many War Savings Stamp stars are on the bulletin board for our class," her chum replies.

And, rushing to the bulletin board, they join several hundred others who read with all of the anxiety of casualty list perusers, the day's war schedule for the various classes.

They glance with pride at the Third Liberty bond score, that shows where Washington Irving High gave three-quarters of a million in Third Liberty bonds; where $32,000 has been spent for War Savings Stamps—$5,000 of which came in last week—making the biggest record of any high school in the city; where the following figures for Red Cross supplies are posted: 5,560 surgical dressings (the largest number from any school), 606 hospital garments, 480 knitted articles and 1,100 comfort kits.

And then they hurry from Red Cross donation totals to the most exciting news of the day to the students—their French war babies.

When the news of adopting fifty-two fatherless children of France reached the girls they were more than elated. Notes whizzed under the study hall desks concerning whether such and such a class should adopt a blond boy or a brunette baby. And, strangely enough, in the whole school of girls each class decided that they preferred a girl baby to adopt. In the senior class, however, many were in favor of a boy—"a boy not too old to be kissed," they specified—however old that is.

On the day that each class became a godmother every member of the class wore a pansy and celebrated "Sweet Sacrifice Day," which meant that all of the money that would otherwise go for sweets would on that day be dropped in a box in the class rooms to be spent for sweets for the new babies. Up in the domestic science rooms the machines are whirring away to provide pretty clothes for the babies.

Last Arbor Day, May 19, the Washington Irving girls gave a goody shower for the boys in Base Hospital No. 1, at Gun Hill Road.

"Say, there's some mistake," said the commissary when the automobiles laden with fruit and flowers appeared. "We didn't order this." One of the teachers assured him there was no mistake, and the convalescent soldiers gathered around and looked on wide-eyed while the girls in middies deposited ten bushels of apples, eight bushels of oranges, two bushels of bananas, several cases of grape-fruit, home-made cakes and two motor trucks and four automobiles full of flowers, including every variety from the garden pansy to rare orchids—and best of all, perhaps, two clothes baskets full of cigarettes!

The flower booth in the lower corridor is an original idea of Miss Mary Schuyler, a teacher—who, by the way, is a great-great-granddaughter of Alexander Hamilton. She lives out at Elmsford, and twice a week she brings in flowers from her own garden, which she sells for the Red Cross. The girls are eager to buy a bouquet at the cost of a few cents, and many of the flowers are bought for use in the art classes or for nature work.

Last week was declared Birthday Week for the Red Cross, and each girl brought one cent for every year.

The German Department has also found a unique way of doing its bit and proving that it is German in language only. Coffee is served in the corridor each day, and the proceeds go toward buying gauze for the Red Cross surgical dressing department.

Up in a light, airy room the upper class girls give their spare hours to the making up of this gauze into Red Cross dressings, under the direction of Miss Florence Baxter, Chairman. Each girl has her own apron and veil, but they are left at the school lockers, so as to be clean and sanitary for the work. Before school and late in the afternoon the room is filled with girls, cutting gauze and basting pajamas.

"We do not allow them to give their school time to this work," Miss Baxter said, "although they are always anxious to be in the workroom. We believe that they should realize that this is a service of sacrifice, and it means using additional time.

The output has increased from less than a thousand dressings in October to 15,500 in April. Almost every girl goes home at night, not only with her knitting bag filled with yarn or a sock in the process of making, but also with a comfort bag which she is stitching for the soldiers.

The library of the Washington Irving has also taken on a warlike aspect. Besides rows of classes, there are up to date books on the war which the girls use in connection with their English and history class work. War posters hang here as well as in the art rooms.

Over on a table in the corner hundreds of books are daily stacked up for the soldiers. Over a thousand volumes were contributed during the week of the book drive for the soldiers.

Probably the most popular spot in the library is a table where the Liberty Loan scrap books are on display. One of the English teachers devised the idea of letting the girls make scrap books with whatever they considered best in the way of art and literature in magazine or newspaper which promoted the Third Liberty Loan—and some remarkably artistic scrap books are the result.

When you have watched all of these forms of service going on at the Washington Irving High School, and then only seen a small part of the whole service programme, you are interested to know what per cent. of these 100 per cent. Uncle Sam boosters are of American parentage. And you have the surprise of your life in store for you when Principal Edward Cornell Zabriskie smiles and says:

"They are 88 per cent. of foreign parentage."

The Evening World will be pleased to report the activities of other schools in Greater New York.

MADE IN GERMANY.

PAUL GARY of Anderson, Ind., is all American, with the exception of a glass eye. The substitute optic is alien.

Gary tried to enlist in the United States Marine Corps, but was rejected when his infirmity was discovered.

"Didn't you know that the loss of an eye would prevent your enlisting?" asked the Sergeant.

"I thought it might," explained Gary; "but this glass blinker is the only part of me that was made in Germany, and I want to take it back."—Case and Comment.